

The Country Wife (1675)¹
By William Wycherley

THE PERSONS

Mr. Horner
Mr. Harcourt
Mr. Dorilant
Mr. Pinchwife
Mr. Sparkish
Sir Jaspar Fidget
Mrs. Margery Pinchwife
Mrs. Alithea
My Lady Fidget
Mrs. Dainty Fidget
Mrs. Squeamish
Old Lady Squeamish
Waiters, Servants, and Attendants
A Boy
A Quack
Lucy, Alithea's Maid

ACT 4.

SCENE 1.

In Pinchwife's house in the morning.
Lucy, Alithea dress'd in new Cloths.

Lucy.

Well---Madam, now have I dress'd you, and set you out with so many ornaments, and spent upon you ounces of essence, and pulvilio; and all this for no other purpose, but as People adorn, and perfume a Corps, for a stinking second-hand-grave, such or as bad I think Master Sparkish's bed.

Alithea

Hold your peace.

Lucy.

Nay, Madam, I will ask you the reason, why you wou'd banish poor Master Harcourt for ever from your sight? how cou'd you be so hard-hearted?

Alithea

'Twas because I was not hard-hearted.

Lucy.

No, no; 'twas 'stark love and kindness, I warrant.

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Alithea

It was so; I wou'd see him no more, because I love him.

Lucy.

Hey day, a very pretty reason.

Alithea

You do not understand me.

Lucy.

I wish you may your self.

Alithea

I was engag'd to marry, you see, another man, whom my justice will not suffer me to deceive, or injure.

Lucy.

Can there be a greater cheat, or wrong done to a Man, than to give him your person, without your heart, I shou'd make a conscience of it.

Alithea

I'll retrieve it for him after I am married a while.

Lucy.

The Woman that marries to love better, will be as [25] much mistaken, as the Wencher that marries to live better. No, Madam, marrying to encrease love, is like gaming to become rich; alas you only loose, what little stock you had before.

Alithea

I find by your Rhetorick you have been brib'd to betray me.

Lucy.

Only by his merit, that has brib'd your heart you see against your word, and rigid honour; but what a Divel is this honour? 'tis sure a disease in the head, like the Megrin, or Falling-sickness, that alwayes hurries People away to do themselves mischief; Men loose their lives by it: Women what's dearer to'em, their love, the life of life.

Alithea

Come, pray talk you no more of honour, nor Master Harcourt; I wish the other wou'd come, to secure my fidelity to him, and his right in me.

Lucy.

You will marry him then?

Alithea

Certainly, I have given him already my word, and will my hand too, to make it good when he comes.

Lucy.

Well, I wish I may never stick pin more, if he be not an errant Natural, to t'other fine Gentleman.

Alithea

I own he wants the wit of Harcourt, which I will dispense withal, for another want he has, which is want of jealousy, which men of wit seldom want.

Lucy.

Lord, Madam, what shou'd you do with a fool to your Husband, you intend to be honest don't you? then that husbandly virtue, credulity, is thrown away upon you.

Alithea

[50] He only that could suspect my virtue, shou'd have cause to do it; 'tis Sparkish's confidence in my truth, that obliges me to be so faithful to him.

Lucy.

You are not sure his opinion may last.

Alithea

I am satisfied, 'tis impossible for him to be jealous, after the proofs I have had of him: Jealousie in a Husband, Heaven defend me from it, it begets a thousand plagues to a poor Woman, the loss of her honour, her quiet, and her---

Lucy.

And her pleasure.

Alithea

What d'ye mean, Impertinent?

Lucy.

Liberty is a great pleasure, Madam.

Alithea

I say loss of her honour, her quiet, nay, her life sometimes; and what's as bad almost, the loss of this Town, that is, she is sent into the Country, which is the last ill usage of a Husband to a Wife, I think.

Lucy.

O do's the wind lye there?

[Aside.

Then of necessity, Madam, you think a man must carry his Wife into the Country, if he be wise; the Country is as terrible I

find to our young English Ladies, as a Monastery to those abroad: and on my Virginity, I think they wou'd rather marry a London-Goaler, than a high Sheriff of a County, since neither can stir from his employment: formerly Women of wit married Fools, for a great Estate, a fine seat, or the like; but now 'tis for a pretty seat only in Lincoln's Inn-fields, St. James's-fields, or the Pall-mall.

Enter to them Sparkish, and Harcourt dress'd like a Parson.

Sparkish

[75] Madam, your humble Servant, a happy day to you, and to us all.

Harcourt

Amen.---

Alithea

Who have we here?

Sparkish

My Chaplain faith---O Madam, poor Harcourt remembers his humble service to you; and in obedience to your last commands, refrains coming into your sight.

Alithea

Is not that he?

Sparkish

No, fye no; but to shew that he ne're intended to hinder our Match has sent his Brother here to joyn our hands: when I get me a Wife, I must get her a Chaplain, according to the Custom; this is his Brother, and my Chaplain.

Alithea

His Brother?

Lucy.

And your Chaplain, to preach in your Pulpit then---

[Aside.

Alithea

His Brother!

Sparkish

Nay, I knew you wou'd not believe it; I told you, Sir, she wou'd take you for your Brother Frank.

Alithea

Believe it!

Lucy.
His Brother! hah, ha, he, he has a trick left still it seems---

[Aside.

Sparkish
Come my dearest, pray let us go to Church before the
Canonical hour is past.

Alithea
For shame you are abus'd still.

Sparkish
By the World 'tis strange now you are so incredulous.

Alithea
'Tis strange you are so credulous.

Sparkish
[100] Dearest of my life, hear me, I tell you this is Ned
Harcourt of Cambridge, by the world, you see he has a
sneaking Colledg look; 'tis true he's something like his Brother
Frank and they differ from each other no more than in their
age, for they were Twins.

Lucy.
Hah, ha, he.

Alithea
Your Servant, Sir, I cannot be so deceiv'd, though you are; but
come let's hear, how do you know what you affirm so
confidently?

Sparkish
Why, I'll tell you all; Frank Harcourt coming to me this
morning, to wish me joy and present his service to you: I ask'd
him, if he cou'd help me to a Parson; whereupon he told me, he
had a Brother in Town who was in Orders, and he went straight
away, and sent him, you see there, to me.

Alithea
Yes, Frank goes, and puts on a black-coat, then tell's you, he is
Ned, that's all you have for't.

Spar,
Pshaw, pshaw, I tell you by the same token, the Midwife put
her Garter about Frank's neck, to know'em asunder, they were
so like.

Alithea

Frank tell's you this too.

Sparkish

Ay, and Ned there too; nay, they are both in a Story.

Alithea

So, so, very foolish.

Sparkish

Lord, if you won't believe one, you had best trye him by your Chamber-maid there; for Chamber-maids must needs know Chaplains from other Men, they are so us'd to'em.

Lucy.

[125] Let's see; nay, I'll be sworn he has the Canonical smirk, and the filthy, clammy palm of a Chaplain.

Alithea

Well, most reverend Doctor, pray let us make an end of this fooling.

Harcourt

With all my soul, Divine, Heavenly Creature, when you please.

Alithea

He speaks like a Chaplain indeed.

Sparkish

Why, was there not, soul, Divine, Heavenly, in what he said.

Alithea

Once more, most impertinent Black-coat, cease your persecution, and let us have a Conclusion of this ridiculous love.

Harcourt

I had forgot, I must sute my Stile to my Coat, or I wear it in vain.

[Aside.

Alithea

I have no more patience left, let us make once an end of this troublesome Love, I say.

Harcourt

So be it, Seraphick Lady, when your Honour shall think it meet, and convenient so to do.

Sparkish

Gad I'm sure none but a Chaplain cou'd speak so, I think.

Alithea

Let me tell you Sir, this dull trick will not serve your turn,
though you delay our marriage, you shall not hinder it.

Harcourt

Far be it from me, Munificent Patroness, to delay your
Marriage, I desire nothing more than to marry you presently,
[150] which I might do, if you your self wou'd; for my Noble,
Good-natur'd and thrice Generous Patron here wou'd not hinder
it.

Sparkish

No, poor man, not I faith.

Harcourt

And now, Madam, let me tell you plainly, no body else shall
marry you by Heavens, I'll die first, for I'm sure I shou'd die
after it.

Lucy.

How his Love has made him forget his Function, as I have seen
it in real Parsons.

Alithea

That was spoken like a Chaplain too, now you understand him,
I hope.

Sparkish

Poor man, he takes it hainously to be refus'd; I can't blame him,
'tis putting an indignity upon him not to be suffer'd, but you'l
pardon me Madam, it shan't be, he shall marry us, come away,
pray Madam.

Lucy.

Hah, ha, he, more ado! 'tis late.

Alithea

Invincible stupidity, I tell you he wou'd marry me, as your
Rival, not as your Chaplain.

Sparkish

Come, come Madam.

[Pulling her away.

Lucy.

I pray Madam, do not refuse this Reverend Divine, the honour and satisfaction of marrying you; for I dare say, he has set his heart upon't, good Doctor.

Alitheia

What can you hope, or design by this?

Harcourt

I cou'd answer her, a reprieve for a day only, often revokes a hasty doom; at worst, if she will not take mercy [175] on me, and let me marry her, I have at least the Lovers second pleasure, hindring my Rivals enjoyment, though but for a time.

Sparkish

Come Madam, 'tis e'ne twelve a clock, and my Mother charg'd me never to be married out of the Canonical hours; come, come, Lord here's such a deal of modesty, I warrant the first day.

Lucy.

Yes, an't please your Worship, married women shew all their Modesty the first day, because married men shew all their love the first day.

Exeunt Sparkish, Alitheia, Harcourt, and Lucy.

The Scene changes to a Bed-chamber, where appear Pinchwife, Mrs. Pinchwife.

Mr. Pinch.

Come tell me, I say.

Mrs. Pinch.

Lord, han't I told it an hundred times over.

Mr. Pinch.

I wou'd try, if in the repetition of the ungrateful tale, I cou'd find her altering it in the least circumstance, for if her story be false, she is so too.

[Aside.

Come how was't Baggage?

Mrs. Pinch.

Lord, what pleasure you take to hear it sure!

Mr. Pinch.

No, you take more in telling it I find, but speak how was't?

Mrs. Pinch.

He carried me up into the house, next to the Exchange.

Mr. Pinchwife
So, and you two were only in the room.

Mrs. Pinchwife
Yes, for he sent away a youth that was there, for some dried fruit, and China Oranges.

Mr. Pinchwife
Did he so? Damn him for it---and for---

Mrs. Pinchwife
[200] But presently came up the Gentlewoman of the house.

Mr. Pinchwife
O 'twas well she did, but what did he do whilst the fruit came?

Mrs. Pinchwife
He kiss'd me an hundred times, and told me he fancied he kiss'd my fine Sister, meaning me you know, whom he said he lov'd with all his Soul, and bid me be sure to tell her so, and to desire her to be at her window, by eleven of the clock this morning, and he wou'd walk under it at that time.

Mr. Pinchwife

And he was as good as his word, very punctual, a pox reward him for't.

[Aside.

Mrs. Pinchwife
Well, and he said if you were not within, he wou'd come up to her, meaning me you know, Bud, still.

Mr. Pinchwife
So---he knew her certainly, but for this confession, I am oblig'd to her simplicity.

[Aside.
But what you stood very still, when he kiss'd you?

Mrs. Pinchwife
Yes I warrant you, wou'd you have had me discover'd my self?

Mr. Pinchwife
But you told me, he did some beastliness to you, as you call'd it, what was't?

Mrs. Pinchwife
Why, he put---

Mr. Pinchwife
What?

Mrs. Pinchwife
Why he put the tip of his tongue between my lips, and so
musl'd me---and I said, I'd bite it.

Mr. Pinchwife
[225] An eternal canker seize it, for a dog.

Mrs. Pinchwife
Nay, you need not be so angry with him neither, for to say
truth, he has the sweetest breath I ever knew.

Mr. Pinchwife
The Devil---you were satisfied with it then, and wou'd do it
again.

Mrs. Pinchwife
Not unless he shou'd force me.

Mr. Pinchwife
Force you, changeling! I tell you no woman can be forced.

Mrs. Pinchwife
Yes, but she may sure, by such a one as he, for he's a proper,
goodly strong man, 'tis hard, let me tell you, to resist him.

Mr. Pinchwife
So, 'tis plain she loves him, yet she has not love enough to
make her conceal it from me, but the sight of him will increase
her aversion for me, and love for him; and that love instruct her
how to deceive me, and satisfie him, all Ideot as she is: Love,
'twas he gave women first their craft, their art of deluding; out
of natures hands, they came plain, open, silly and fit for slaves,
as she and Heaven intended'em; but damn'd Love---Well---I
must strangle that little Monster, whilst I can deal with him.
Go fetch Pen, Ink and Paper out of the next room:

Mrs Mr. Pinchwife
Yes Bud.

[Exit Mrs. Pinchwife.

Mr. Pinchwife
Why should Women have more invention in love than men? It
can only be, because they have more desires, more solliciting
passions, more lust, and more of the Devil.
Mistris Pinchwife returns.

[Aside.

[250] Come, Minks, sit down and write.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Ay, dear Bud, but I can't do't very well.

Mr. Pinchwife

I wish you cou'd not at all.

Mrs. Pinchwife

But what shou'd I write for?

Mr. Pinchwife

I'll have you write a Letter to your Lover.

Mrs. Pinchwife

O Lord, to the fine Gentleman a Letter!

Mr. Pinchwife

Yes, to the fine Gentleman.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Lord, you do but jeer; sure you jest.

Mr. Pinchwife

I am not so merry, come write as I bid you.

Mrs. Pinchwife

What, do you think I am a fool?

Mr. Pinchwife

She's afraid I would not dictate any love to him, therefore she's unwilling; but you had best begin.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Indeed, and indeed, but I won't, so I won't.

Mr. Pinchwife

Why?

Mrs. Pinchwife

Because he's in Town, you may send for him if you will.

Mr. Pinchwife

Very well, you wou'd have him brought to you; is it come to this? I say take the pen and write, or you'll provoke me.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Lord, what d'ye make a fool of me for? Don't I know that Letters are never writ, but from the Countrey to London, and from London into the Countrey; now he's in Town, and I am in Town too; therefore I can't write to him you know.

Mr. Pinchwife
So I am glad it is no worse, she is innocent enough [275] yet

[Aside.
Yes you may when your Husband bids you write Letters to people that are in Town.

Mrs. Pinchwife
O may I so! Then I'm satisfied.

Mr. Pinchwife
Come begin---Sir---

[Dictates.

Mrs. Pinchwife
Shan't I say, Dear Sir? You know one says always something more than bare Sir.

Mr. Pinchwife

Write as I bid you, or I will write Whore with this Penknife in your Face.

Mrs. Pinchwife
Nay good Bud---Sir---

[She writes.

Mr. Pinchwife
Though I suffer'd last night your nauseous, loath'd Kisses and Embraces---Write

Mrs. Pinchwife
Nay, why shou'd I say so, you know I told you, he had a sweet breath.

Mr. Pinchwife
Write.

Mrs. Pinchwife
Let me but put out, loath'd.

Mr. Pinchwife
Write I say.

Mrs. Pinchwife
Well then.

[Writes.

Mr. Pinchwife

Let's see what have you writ?

Though I suffer'd last night your kisses and embraces---

[Takes the paper, and reads.

Thou impudent creature, where is nauseous and loath'd?

Mrs. Pinchwife

I can't abide to write such filthy words.

Mr. Pinchwife

Once more write as I'd have you, and question it not, or I will spoil thy writing with this, I will stab out those eyes that cause my mischief.

[Holds up the penknife.

Mrs. Pinchwife

[300] O Lord, I will.

Mr. Pinchwife

So---so---Let's see now!

[Reads.

Though I suffer'd last night your nauseous, loath'd kisses, and embraces; Go on---Yet I would not have you presume that you shall ever repeat them---So---

[She writes.

Mrs. Pinchwife

I have writ it.

Mr. Pinchwife

On then---I then conceal'd my self from your knowledge, to avoid your insolencies---

[She writes.

Mrs. Pinchwife

So---

Mr. Pinchwife

The same reason now I am out of your hands---

[She writes.

Mrs. Pinchwife

So---

Mr. Pinchwife
Makes me own to you my unfortunate, though innocent frolick,
of being in man's cloths.

[She writes.

Mrs. Pinchwife
So---

Mr. Pinchwife
That you may for ever more cease to pursue her, who hates and
detests you---

[She writes on.

Mrs. Pinchwife
So--h---

[Sighs.

Mr. Pinchwife
What do you sigh?---detests you---as much as she loves her
Husband and her Honour---

Mrs. Pinchwife

I vow Husband he'll ne'er believe, I shou'd write such a Letter.

Mr. Pinchwife
What he'd expect a kinder from you? come now your name
only.

Mrs. Pinchwife
What, shan't I say your most faithful, humble Servant till
death?

Mr. Pinchwife
[325] No, tormenting Fiend; her stile I find wou'd be very soft.

[Aside.
Come wrap it up now, whilst I go fetch wax and a candle; and
write on the back side, for Mr. Horner.

[Exit Pinchwife.

Mrs. Pinchwife
For Mr. Horner---So, I am glad he has told me his name; Dear
Mr. Horner, but why should I send thee such a Letter, that will
vex thee, and make thee angry with me;---well I will not send
it---Ay but then my husband will kill me---for I see plainly, he
won't let me love Mr. Horner---but what care I for my
Husband---I won't so I won't send poor Mr. Horner such a
Letter---but then my Husband---But oh---what if I writ at

bottom, my Husband made me write it---Ay but then my Husband wou'd see't---Can one have no shift, ah, a London woman wou'd have had a hundred presently; stay---what if I shou'd write a Letter, and wrap it up like this, and write upon't too; ay but then my Husband wou'd see't---I don't know what to do---But yet y vads I'll try, so I will--- for I will not send this Letter to poor Mr. Horner, come what will on't. Dear, Sweet Mr. Horner---So--- my Husband wou'd have me send you a base, rude, unmannerly Letter---but She writes, and repeats what she hath writ. I won't---so---and wou'd have me forbid you loving me---but I wont---so---and wou'd have me [350] say to you, I hate you poor Mr. Horner---but I won't tell a lye for him---there---for I'm sure if you and I were in the Countrey at cards together,---so---I cou'd not help treading on your Toe under the Table---so---or rubbing knees with you, and staring in your face, 'till you saw me ---very well---and then looking down, and blushing for an hour together---so---but I must make haste before my Husband come; and now he has taught me to write Letters: You shall have longer ones from me, who am Dear, dear, poor dear Mr. Horner, your most Humble Friend, and Servant to command 'till death, Margery Pinchwife. Stay I must give him a hint at bottom---so---now wrap it up just like t'other---so---now write for Mr. Horner,--- But oh now what shall I do with it? for here comes my Husband. Enter Pinchwife.

Mr. Pinchwife

I have been detained by a Sparkish Coxcomb, who pretended a visit to me; but I fear 'twas to my Wife.

[Aside.

What, have you done?

Mrs. Pinchwife

Ay, ay Bud, just now.

Mr. Pinchwife

Let's see't, what d'ye tremble for; what, you wou'd not have it go?

Mrs. Pinchwife

Here---No I must not give him that, so I had been served if I He opens, and reads the first Letter. had given him this.

[Aside.

Mr. Pinchwife

Come, where's the Wax and Seal?

Mrs. Pinchwife

[375] Lord, what shall I do now? Nay then I have it---

[Aside.

Pray let me see't, Lord you think

Snatches the Letter from him, changes it for the other, seals it,
and delivers it to him.

me so errand a fool, I cannot seal a Letter, I will do't, so I will.

Mr. Pinchwife

Nay, I believe you will learn that, and other things too, which I
wou'd not have you.

Mrs. Pinchwife

So, han't I done it curiously?

I think I have, there's my Letter going to Mr. Horner; since he'll
needs have me send Letters to Folks.

[Aside.

Mr. Pinchwife

'Tis very well, but I warrant, you wou'd not have it go now?

Mrs. Pinchwife

Yes indeed, but I wou'd, Bud, now.

Mr. Pinchwife

Well you are a good Girl then, come let me lock you up in your
chamber, 'till I come back; and be sure you come not within
three strides of the window, when I am gone; for I have a spye
in the street.

[Exit Mrs. Pinchwife

At least, 'tis fit she think so, if we do

Pinchwife locks the door.

not cheat women, they'll cheat us; and fraud may be justly used
with secret enemies, of which a Wife is the most dangerous;
and he that has a handsome one to keep, and a Frontier Town,
must provide against treachery, rather than open Force---Now I
have secur'd all within, I'll deal with the Foe without with false
intelligence.

Holds up the Letter.

[Exit Pinchwife.

The Scene changes to Horner's Lodging.

Quack and Horner.

Quack.

Well Sir, how fadges the new design; have you [400] not the
luck of all your brother Projectors, to deceive only your self at
last.

Horner

No, good Domine Doctor, I deceive you it seems, and others
too; for the grave Matrons, and old ridgid Husbands think me
as unfit for love, as they are; but their Wives, Sisters and
Daughters, know some of'em better things already.

Quack.
Already!

Horner
Already, I say; last night I was drunk with half a dozen of your civil persons, as you call'em, and people of Honour, and so was made free of their Society, and dressing rooms for ever hereafter; and am already come to the privileges of sleeping upon their Pallats, warming Smocks, tying Shooes and Garters, and the like Doctor, already, already Doctor.

Quack.
You have made use of your time, Sir.

Horner
I tell thee, I am now no more interruption to'em, when they sing, or talk bawdy, than a little squab French Page, who speaks no English.

Quack.
But do civil persons, and women of Honour drink, and sing bawdy Songs?

Horner
O amongst Friends, amongst Friends; for your Bigots in Honour, are just like those in Religion; they fear the eye of the

world, more than the eye of Heaven, and think there is no virtue, but railing at vice; and no sin, but giving scandal: They rail at a poor, little, kept Player, and keep [425] themselves some young, modest Pulpit Comedian to be privy to their sins in their Closets, not to tell'em of them in their Chappels.

Quack.
Nay, the truth on't is, Priests amongst the women now, have quite got the better of us Lay Confessors, Physicians.

Horner
And they are rather their Patients, but---
Enter my Lady Fidget, looking about her.
Now we talk of women of Honour, here comes one, step behind the Screen there, and but observe; if I have not particular privileges, with the women of reputation already, Doctor, already.

Lady Fidget
Well Horner, am not I a woman of Honour? you see I'm as good as my word.

Horner
And you shall see Madam, I'll not be behind hand with you in honour; and I'll be as good as my word too, if you please but to withdraw into the next room.

Lady Fidget

But first, my dear Sir, you must promise to have a care of my dear Honour.

Horner

If you talk a word more of your Honour, you'll make me incapable to wrong it; to talk of Honour in the mysteries of Love, is like talking of Heaven, or the Deity in an operation of Witchcraft, just when you are employing the Devil, it makes the charm impotent.

Lady Fidget

Nay, fie, let us not be smooty; but you talk of mysteries, and bewitching to me, I don't understand you.

Horner

[450] I tell you Madam, the word money in a Mistresses mouth, at such a nick of time, is not a more disheartning sound to a younger Brother, than that of Honour to an eager Lover like my self.

Lady Fidget

But you can't blame a Lady of my reputation to be chary.

Horner

Chary---I have been chary of it already, by the report I have caus'd of my self.

Lady Fidget

Ay, but if you shou'd ever let other women know that dear secret, it would come out; nay, you must have a great care of your conduct; for my acquaintance are so censorious, (oh 'tis a wicked censorious world, Mr. Horner) I say, are so censorious, and detracting, that perhaps they'll talk to the prejudice of my Honour, though you shou'd not let them know the dear secret.

Horner

Nay Madam, rather than they shall prejudice your Honour, I'll prejudice theirs; and to serve you, I'll lye with 'em all, make the secret their own, and then they'll keep it: I am a Machiavel in love Madam.

Lady Fidget

O, no Sir, not that way.

Horner

Nay, the Devil take me, if censorious women are to be silenc'd any other way.

Lady Fidget

A secret is better kept I hope, by a single person, than a multitude; therefore pray do not trust any body else with it, dear, dear Mr. Horner.

[Embracing him.
Enter Sir Jaspar Fidget.

Sir Jas.
[475] How now!

Lady Fidget
O my Husband---prevented---and what's almost as bad, found with my arms about another man--- that will appear too much--
-what shall I say?

[Aside.
Sir Jaspar come hither, I am trying if Mr. Horner were ticklish, and he's as ticklish as can be, I love to torment the confounded Toad; let you and I tickle him.

Sir Jas.
No, your Ladyship will tickle him better without me, I suppose, but is this your buying China, I thought you had been at the China House?

Horner
China-House, that's my Cue, I must take it

[Aside.
A Pox, can't you keep your impertinent Wives at home? some men are troubled with the Husbands, but I with the Wives; but I'd have you to know, since I cannot be your Journey-man by night, I will not be your drudge by day, to squire your wife about, and be your man of straw, or scare-crow only to Pyes and Jays; that would be nibbling at your forbidden fruit; I shall be shortly the Hackney Gentleman-Usher of the Town.

Sir Jas.
Heh, heh, he, poor fellow he's in the right on't faith, to squire women about for other folks, is as ungrateful an employment, as to tell money for other folks;
[Aside.
heh, he, he, ben't angry Horner---

Lady Fidget
No, 'tis I have more reason to be angry, who am left by you, to go abroad indecently alone; or, what is more [500] indecent, to pin my self upon such ill bred people of your acquaintance, as this is.

Sir Jas.
Nay, pr'ythee what has he done?

Lady Fidget

Nay, he has done nothing.

Sir Jas.

But what d'ye take ill, if he has done nothing?

Lady Fidget

Hah, hah, hah, Faith, I can't but laugh however; why d'ye think the unmannerly toad wou'd not come down to me to the Coach, I was fain to come up to fetch him, or go without him, which I 'was resolved not to do; for he knows China very well, and has himself very good, but will not let me see it, lest I should beg some; but I will find it out, and have what I came for yet.

Exit Lady Fidget, and locks the door, followed by Horner to the door.

Horner

Lock the door Madam---

[Apart to Lady Fidget.

So, she has got into my chamber, and lock'd me out; oh the impertinency of woman-kind! Well Sir Jaspar, plain dealing is a Jewel; if ever you suffer your Wife to trouble me again here, she shall carry you home a pair of Horns, by my Lord Major she shall; though I cannot furnish you my self, you are sure, yet I'll find a way.

Sir Jas.

Hah, ha, he, at my first coming in, and finding her arms about him, tickling him it seems, I was half jealous, but now I see my folly.

[Aside.

Heh, he, he, poor Horner.

Horner

Nay, though you laugh now, 'twill be my turn e're long: Oh women, more impertinent, more cunning, and [525] more mischievous than their Monkeys, and to me almost as ugly--- now is she throwing my things about, and rifling all I have, but I'll get into her the back way, and so rifle her for it---

Sir Jas.

Hah, ha, ha, poor angry Horner.

Horner

Stay here a little, I'll ferret her out to you presently, I warrant.

[Exit Horner at t'other door.

Sir Jas.

Wife, my Lady Fidget, Wife, he is coming into you the back way.

Sir Jaspar calls through the door to his Wife, she answers from within.

Lady Fidget

Let him come, and welcome, which way he will.

Sir Jas.

He'll catch you, and use you roughly, and be too strong for you.

Lady Fidget

Don't you trouble your self, let him if he can.

Quack. [Behind]

This indeed, I cou'd not have believ'd from him, nor any but my own eyes.

Enter Mistris Squeamish.

Squeam.

Where's this Woman-hater, this Toad, this ugly, greasie, dirty Sloven?

Sir Jas.

So the women all will have him ugly, methinks he is a comely person; but his wants make his form contemptible to'em; and 'tis e'en as my Wife said yesterday, talking of him, that a proper

handsome Eunuch, was as ridiculous a thing, as a Gigantick Coward.

Squeam.

Sir Jaspar, your Servant, where is the odious [550] Beast?

Sir Jas.

He's within in his chamber, with my Wife; she's playing the wag with him.

Squeam.

Is she so, and he's a clownish beast, he'll give her no quarter, he'll play the wag with her again, let me tell you; come, let's go help her---What, the door's lock't?

Sir Jas.

Ay, my Wife lock't it---

Squeam.

Did she so, let us break it open then?

Sir Jas.

No, no, he'll do her no hurt.

Squeam.

No---But is there no other way to get into 'em, whither goes this? I will disturb'em.

[Aside.

[Exit Squeamish at another door.
Enter old Lady Squeamish.

Old L. Squeam.

Where is this Harlotry, this Impudent Baggage, this rambling Tomrigg? O Sir Jaspar, I'm glad to see you here, did you not see my vil'd Grandchild come in hither just now?

Sir Jas.
Yes,

Old L. Squeam,

Ay, but where is she then? where is she? Lord Sir Jaspar I have e'ne ratled my self to pieces in pursuit of her, but can you tell what she makes here, they say below, no woman lodges here.

Sir Jas.
No.

Old L. Squeam.

No---What does she here then? say if it be not a womans lodging, what makes she here? but are you sure no woman lodges here?

Sir Jas.

No, nor no man neither, this is Mr. Horners Lodging.

Old L. Squeam.

[575] Is it so are you sure?

Sir Jas.

Yes, yes.

Old L. Squeam.

So then there's no hurt in't I hope, but where is he?

Sir Jas.

He's in the next room with my Wife.

Old L. Squeam.

Nay if you trust him with your wife, I may with my Bidy, they say he's a merry harmless man now, e'ne as harmless a man as ever came out of Italy with a good voice, and as pretty harmless company for a Lady, as a Snake without his teeth.

Sir Jas.
Ay. ay poor man.
Enter Mrs. Squeamish.

Squeam.
I can't find'em---Oh are you here, Grandmother, I follow'd you
must know my Lady Fidget hither, 'tis the prettyest lodging,
and I have been staring on the prettyest Pictures.

[Enter Lady Fidget with a piece of China in her hand, and
Horner following.

Lady Fidget
And I have been toying and moyling, for the pretti'st piece of
China, my Dear.

Horner
Nay she has been too hard for me do what I cou'd.

Squeam.
Oh Lord I'll have some China too, good Mr. Horner, don't
think to give other people China, and me none, come in with
me too.

Horner
Upon my honour I have none left now.

Squeam.
Nay, nay I have known you deny your China before now, but
you shan't put me off so, come---

Horner
This Lady had the last there.

Lady Fidget
[600] Yes indeed Madam, to my certain knowledge he has no
more left.

Squeam.
O but it may be he may have some you could not find.

Lady Fidget
What d'y think if he had had any left, I would not have had it
too, for we women of quality never think we have China
enough.

Horner
Do not take it ill, I cannot make China for you all, but I will
have a Rol-waggon for you too, another time.

Squeam.
Thank you dear Toad.

[To Horn, aside.

La Fid.
What do you mean by that promise?

Horner
Alas she has an innocent, literal understanding.

Apart to Lady Fidget.

Old L. Squeam.
Poor Mr. Horner, he has enough to do to please you all, I see.

Horner
Ay Madam, you see how they use me.

Old L. Squeam.
Poor Gentleman I pity you.

Horner

I thank you Madam, I could never find pity, but from such reverend Ladies as you are, the young ones will never spare a man.

Squeam.
Come come, Beast, and go dine with us, for we shall want a man at Hombre after dinner.

Horner
That's all their use of me Madam you see.

Squeam.
Come Sloven, I'll lead you to be sure of you.

Pulls him by the Crevat.

Old L. Squeam.
[625] Alas poor man how she tugs him, kiss, kiss her, that's the way to make such nice women quiet.

Horner
No Madam, that Remedy is worse than the Torment, they know I dare suffer any thing rather than do it.

Old La. Squeam.

Prythee kiss her, and I'll give you her Picture in little, that you admir'd so last night, prythee do.

Horner

Well nothing but that could bribe me, I love a woman only in Effigie, and good Painting as much as I hate them---I'll do't, for I cou'd adore the Devil well painted.

[Kisses Mrs. Squeam.

Squeam.

Foh, you filthy Toad, nay now I've done jesting.

Old L. Squam.

Ha, ha, ha, I told you so.

Squeam.

Foh a kiss of his---

Sir Jas.

Has no more hurt in't, than one of my Spaniels.

Squeam.

Nor no more good neither.

Quack.

I will now believe any thing he tells me.

[Behind.

Enter Mr. Pinchwife.

Lady Fidget

O Lord here's a man, Sir Jaspar, my Mask, my Mask, I would not be seen here for the world.

Sir Jas.

What not when I am with you.

Lady Fidget

No, no my honour---let's be gone.

Squeam.

Oh Grandmother, let us be gone, make hast, make hast, I know not how he may censure us.

Lady Fidget

Be found in the lodging of any thing like a man, away.

[Exeunt Sir Jas. Lady Fidget Old La. Squeam. Mrs. Squeamish.

Quack.

What's here another Cuckold---he looks like one, and none else sure have any business with him,

[Behind.

Horner

[650] Well what brings my dear friend hither?

Mr. Pinch.

Your impertinency.

Horner

My impertinency---why you Gentlemen that have got handsome Wives, think you have a privilege of saying any thing to your friends, and are as brutish, as if you were our Creditors.

Mr. Pinch.

No Sir, I'll ne're trust you any way.

Horner

But why not, dear Jack, why diffide in me, thou knowst so well.

Mr. Pinchwife

Because I do know you so well.

Horner

Han't I been always thy friend honest Jack, always ready to serve thee, in love, or battle, before thou wert married, and am so still.

Mr. Pinchwife

I believe so you wou'd be my second now indeed.

Horner

Well then dear Jack, why so unkind, so grum, so strange to me, come prythee kiss me deare Rogue, gad I was always I say, and am still as much thy Servant as---

Mr. Pinchwife

As I am yours Sir. What you wou'd send a kiss to my Wife, is that it?

Horner

So there 'tis---a man can't shew his friendship to a married man, but presently he talks of his wife to you, prythee let thy Wife alone, and let thee and I be all one, as we were wont,

what thou art as shy of my kindness, as a Lumbard-street
Alderman of a Courtiers civility at Lockets.

Mr. Pinchwife

But you are over kind to me, as kind, as if I were [675] your
Cuckold already, yet I must confess you ought to be kind and
civil to me, since I am so kind, so civil to you, as to bring you
this, look you there Sir.

[Delivers him a Letter.

Horner
What is't?

Mr. Pinch.
Only a Love Letter Sir.

Horner
From whom---how, this is from your Wife--- hum---and hum--

-

[Reads.

Mr. Pinchwife
Even from my Wife Sir, am I not wondrous kind and civil to
you, now too? [Aside. But you'l not think her so.

Horner
Ha, is this a trick of his or hers

[Aside.

Mr. Pinchwife
The Gentleman's surpriz'd I find, what you expected a kinder
Letter?

Horner
No faith not I, how cou'd I.

Mr. Pinchwife
Yes yes, I'm sure you did, a man so well made as you are must
needs be disappointed, if the women declare not their passion
at first sight or opportunity.

Horner
But what should this mean? stay the Postscript. Be sure you love
me whatsoever my husband says to the contrary, and let him
not see this, lest he should come home, and pinch me, or kill
my Squirrel.
[Reads aside.
It seems he knows not what the Letter contains.

[Aside.

Mr. Pinchwife
Come ne're wonder at it so much.

Horner
Faith I can't help it.

Mr. Pinchwife
Now I think I have deserv'd your infinite friendship, [700] and kindness, and have shewed my self sufficiently an obliging kind friend and husband, am I not so, to bring a Letter from my Wife to her Gallant?

Horner
Ay, the Devil take me, art thou, the most obliging, kind friend and husband in the world, ha, ha.

Mr. Pinchwife
Well you may be merry Sir, but in short I must tell you Sir, my honour will suffer no jesting.

Horner
What do'st thou mean?

Mr. Pinchwife
Does the Letter want a Comment? then know Sir, though I have been so civil a husband, as to bring you a Letter from my Wife, to let you kiss and court her to my face, I will not be a Cuckold Sir, I will not.

Horner
Thou art mad with jealousy, I never saw thy Wife in my life, but at the Play yesterday, and I know not if it were she or no, I court her, kiss her!

Mr. Pinchwife
I will not be a Cuckold I say, there will be danger in making me a Cuckold.

Horner
Why, wert thou not well cur'd of thy last clap?

Mr. Pinchwife
I weare a Sword.

Horner
It should be taken from thee, lest thou should'st do thy self a mischief with it, thou art mad, Man.

Mr. Pinchwife

As mad as I am, and as merry as you are, I must have more reason from you e're we part, I say again though you kiss'd, and courted last night my Wife in man's clothes, as she confesses in her Letter.

Horner

[725] Ha---

[Aside.

Mr. Pinchwife

Both she and I say you must not design it again, for you have mistaken your woman, as you have done your man.

Horner

Oh---I understand something now---[Aside. Was that thy Wife? why would'st thou not tell me 'twas she? faith my freedome with her was your fault, not mine.

Mr. Pinchwife

Faith so 'twas---

[Aside.

Horner

Fye, I'de never do't to a woman before her husbands face, sure.

Mr. Pinchwife

But I had rather you should do't to my wife before my face, than behind my back, and that you shall never doe.

Horner

No---you will hinder me.

Mr. Pinchwife

If I would not hinder you, you see by her Letter, she wou'd.

Horner

Well, I must e'ne acquiess then, and be contented with what she writes.

Mr. Pinchwife

I'le assure you 'twas voluntarily writ, I had no hand in't you may believe me.

Horner

I do believe thee, faith.

Mr. Pinchwife

And believe her too, for she's an innocent creature, has no dissembling in her, and so fare you well Sir.

Horner

Pray however present my humble service to her, and tell her I will obey her Letter to a tittle, and fulfill her desires [750] be what they will, or with what difficulty soever I do't, and you shall be no more jealous of me, I warrant her, and you---

Mr. Pinchwife

Well then fare you well, and play with any mans honour but mine, kiss any mans wife but mine, and welcome---

[Exit Mr. Pinch.

Horner

Ha, ha, ha, Doctor.

Quack.

It seems he has not heard the report of you, or does not believe it.

Horner

Ha, ha, now Doctor what think you?

Quack.

Pray let's see the Letter---hum---for--- deare---love you---

[Reads the Letter.

Horner

I wonder how she cou'd contrive it! what say'st thou to't, 'tis an Original.

Quack.

So are your Cuckolds too Originals: for they are like no other common Cuckolds, and I will henceforth believe it not impossible for you to Cuckold the Grand Signior amidst his Guards of Eunuchs, that I say---

Horner

And I say for the Letter, 'tis the first love Letter that ever was without Flames, Darts, Fates, Destinies, Lying and Dissembling in't.

Enter Sparkish pulling in Mr. Pinchwife.

Sparkish

Come back, you are a pretty Brother-in-law, neither go to Church, nor to dinner with your Sister Bride.

Mr. Pinchwife

My Sister denies her marriage, and you see is gone away from you dissatisfy'd.

Sparkish

Pshaw, upon a foolish scruple, that our Parson was [775] not in lawful Orders, and did not say all the Common Prayer, but 'tis her modesty only I believe, but let women be never so modest the first day, they'l be sure to come to themselves by night, and I shall have enough of her then; in the mean time, Harry Horner, you must dine with me, I keep my wedding at my Aunts in the Piazza.

Horner

Thy wedding, what stale Maid has liv'd to despaire of a husband, or what young one of a Gallant?

Sparkish

O your Servant Sir---this Gentlemans Sister then ---No stale Maid.

Horner

I'm sorry for't.

Mr. Pinchwife

How comes he so concern'd for her---[Aside.

Sparkish

You sorry for't, why do you know any ill by her?

Horner

No, I know none but by thee, 'tis for her sake, not yours, and another mans sake that might have hop'd, I thought---

Sparkish

Another Man, another man, what is his Name?

Horner

Nay since 'tis past he shall be nameless.
Poor Harcourt I am sorry thou mist her---
[Aside

Mr. Pinchwife

He seems to be much troubled at the match---.
[Aside.

Sparkish

Prythee tell me---nay you shan't go Brother.

Mr. Pinchwife

I must of necessity, but I'll come to you to dinner.
[Exit Pinchwife.

Sparkish

But Harry, what have I a Rival in my Wife already? but withal my heart, for he may be of use to me hereafter, for [800] though my hunger is now my sawce, and I can fall on heartily without, but the time will come, when a Rival will be as good sawce for a married man to a wife, as an Orange to Veale.

Horner

O thou damn'd Rogue, thou hast set my teeth on edge with thy Orange.

Sparkish

Then let's to dinner, there I was with you againe, come.

Horner

But who dines with thee?

Sparkish

My Friends and Relations, my Brother Pinchwife you see of your acquaintance.

Horner

And his Wife.

Sparkish

No gad, he'l nere let her come amongst us good fellows, your stingy country Coxcomb keeps his wife from his friends, as he does his little Firkin of Ale, for his own drinking, and a Gentleman can't get a smack on't, but his servants, when his back is turn'd broach it at their pleasures, and dust it away, ha, ha, ha, gad I am witty, I think, considering I was married to day, by the world, but come---

Horner

No, I will not dine with you, unless you can fetch her too.

Sparkish

Pshaw what pleasure can'st thou have with women now, Harry?

Horner

My eyes are not gone, I love a good prospect yet, and will not dine with you, unless she does too, go fetch [825] her therefore, but do not tell her husband, 'tis for my sake.

Sparkish

Well I'll go try what I can do, in the mean time come away to my Aunts lodging, 'tis in the way to Pinchwifes.

Horner

The poor woman has call'd for aid, and stretch'd forth her hand
Doctor, I cannot but help her over the Pale out of the Bryars.

[Exeunt Sparkish, Horner, Quack.

The Scene changes to Pinchwifes house.

Mrs. Pinchwife alone leaning on her elbow.

A Table, Pen, Ink, and Paper.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Well 'tis 'ene so, I have got the London disease, they call Love,
I am sick of my Husband, and for my Gallant; I have heard this
distemper, call'd a Feaver, but methinks 'tis liker an Ague, for
when I think of my Husband, I tremble and am in a cold sweat,
and have inclinations to vomit, but when I think of my Gallant,
dear Mr. Horner, my hot fit comes, and I am all in a Feaver,
indeed, & as in other Feavers, my own Chamber is tedious to
me, and I would fain be remov'd to his, and then methinks I
shou'd be well; ah poor Mr. Horner, well I cannot, will not stay
here, therefore I'll make an end of my Letter to him, which
shall be a finer Letter than my last, because I have studied it
like any thing; O Sick, Sick!

[Takes the Pen and writes.

Enter Mr. Pinchwife who seeing her writing steales softly
behind her, and looking over her shoulder, snatches the paper
from her.

Mr. Pinchwife

What writing more Letters?

Mrs. Pinchwife

O Lord Budd, why d'ye fright me so?

She offers to run out: he stops her, and reads.

Mr. Pinchwife

How's this! nay you shall not stir Madam.

[850] Deare, Deare, deare, Mr Horner---very well--- I have
taught you to write Letters to good purpose---but let's see't.
First I am to beg your pardon for my boldness in writing to
you, which I'de have you to know, I would not have done, had
not you said first you lov'd me so extreamly, which if you doe,
you will never suffer me to lye in the arms of another man,
whom I loath. nauseate, and detest---[Now you can write these
filthy words] but what follows--- Therefore I hope you will
speedily find some way to free me from this unfortunate match,
which was never, I assure you, of my choice, but I'm afraid 'tis
already too far gone; however if you love me, as I do you, you
will try what you can do, but you must help me away before to
morrow, or else alas I shall be for ever out of your reach, for I
can defer no longer our---our---what is to follow our--- speak
what? our Journey into

[The Letter concludes.

the Country I suppose---Oh Woman, damn'd Woman, and
Love, damn'd Love, their old Tempter, for this is one of his
miracles, in a moment, he can make those blind that cou'd see,
and those see that were blind, those dumb that could speak, and

those prattle who were dumb before, nay what is more than all,
make these dow-bak'd, senseless, indocile animals, Women, too
hard for us their Politick Lords and Rulers in a moment; But
make an end of your Letter, and then [875] I'll make an end of
you thus, and all my plagues together.

Draws his Sword.

Mrs. Pinchwife
O Lord, O Lord you are such a Passionate Man, Budd.
Enter Sparkish.

Sparkish
How now what's here to doe.

Mr. Pinchwife
This Fool here now!

Sparkish
What drawn upon your Wife? you shou'd never do that but at
night in the dark when you can't hurt her, this is my Sister in
Law is it not? ay faith e'ne our
Pulls aside her Handkercheife.
Country Margery, one may know her, come she and you must
go dine with me, dinner's ready, come, but where's my Wife, is
she not come home yet, where is she?

Mr. Pinchwife
Making you a Cuckold, 'tis that they all doe, as soon as they
can.

Sparkish
What the Wedding day? no, a Wife that designs to make a
Cully of her Husband, will be sure to let him win the first stake
of love, by the world, but come they stay dinner for us, come
I'll lead down our Margery.

Mrs. Pinchwife
No---Sir go we'll follow you.

Sparkish
I will not wag without you.

Mr. Pinchwife
This Coxcomb is a sensible torment to me amidst the greatest
in the world.

Sparkish
Come, come Madam Margery.

Mr. Pinchwife

No I'll lead her my way, what would you treat your friends
[900] with mine, for want of your own Wife?
Leads her. to t'other door, and locks her in and returns.
I am contented my rage should take breath---

[Aside.

Sparkish
I told Horner this.

Mr. Pinchwife
Come now.

Sparkish
Lord, how shy you are of your Wife, but let me tell you
Brother, we men of wit have amongst us a saying, that
Cuckolding like the small Pox comes with a fear, and you may
keep your Wife as much as you will out of danger of infection,
but if her constitution incline her to't, she'll have it sooner or
later by the world, say they.

Mr. Pinchwife
What a thing is a Cuckold, that every fool can make him
ridiculous---
[Aside.
Well Sir---But let me advise you, now you are come to be
concern'd, because you suspect the danger, not to neglect the

means to prevent it, especially when the greatest share of the
Malady will light upon your own head, for---

How's ere the kind Wife's Belly comes to swell.
The Husband breeds for her, and first is ill.

ACT 5.

SCENE 1.

Mr. Pinchwife's House.

Enter Mr. Pinchwife and Mrs. Pinchwife, a Table and Candle.

Mr. Pinchwife
Come take the Pen and make an end of the Letter, just as you
intended, if you are false in a tittle, I shall soon perceive it, and
punish you with this as you deserve, write what was to follow--
-let's see---

Lays his hand on his Sword.

[You must make haste and help me away before to morrow, or
else I shall be for ever out of your reach, for I can defer no
longer our---] What follows our?---

Mrs. Pinchwife
Must all out then Budd?--- Look you there then.

Mrs. Pinchwife takes the Pen and writes.

Mr. Pinchwife

Let's see---[For I can defer no longer our---Wedding---Your slighted Alithea] What's the meaning of this, my Sisters name to't, speak, unriddle?

Mrs. Pinchwife

Yes indeed Budd.

Mr. Pinchwife

But why her name to't speak---speak I say?

Mrs. Pinchwife

Ay but you'll tell her then again, if you wou'd not tell her again.

Mr. Pinchwife

I will not, I am stunn'd, my head turns round, speak.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Won't you tell her indeed, and indeed.

Mr. Pinchwife

No, speak I say.

Mrs. Pinchwife

She'll be angry with me, but I had rather she should be angry with me than you Budd; and to tell you the truth, 'twas she made me write the Letter, and taught me what I [25] should write.

Mr. Pinchwife

Ha---I thought the stile was somewhat better than her own, but how cou'd she come to you to teach you, since I had lock'd you up alone.

Mrs. Pinchwife

O through the key hole Budd.

Mr. Pinchwife

But why should she make you write a Letter for her to him, since she can write her self?

Mrs. Pinchwife

Why she said because---for I was unwilling to do it.

Mr. Pinchwife

Because what---because.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Because lest Mr. Horner should be cruel, and refuse her, or vaine afterwards, and shew the Letter, she might disown it, the hand not being hers.

Mr. Pinchwife

How's this? ha---then I think I shall come to my self again--- This changeling cou'd not invent this lye, but if she cou'd, why should she? she might think I should soon discover it---stay--- now I think on't too, Horner said he was sorry she had married Sparkish, and her disowning her marriage to me, makes me think she has evaded it, for Horner's sake, yet why should she take this course, but men in love are fools, women may well be so.---

[Aside.

But hark you Madam, your Sister went out in the morning, and I have not seen her within since.

Mrs. Pinchwife

A lack a day she has been crying all day above [50] it seems in a corner.

Mr. Pinchwife

Where is she, let me speak with her.

Mrs. Pinchwife

O Lord then he'l discover all---

[Aside.

Pray hold Budd, what d'y mean to discover me, she'l know I have told you then, pray Budd let me talk with her first---

Mr. Pinchwife

I must speak with her to know whether Horner ever made her any promise; and whether she be married to Sparkish or no.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Pray dear Budd don't, till I have spoken with her and told her that I have told you all, for she'll kill me else.

Mr. Pinchwife

Go then and bid her come out to me.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Yes, yes Budd---

Mr. Pinchwife

Let me see---

Mrs. Pinchwife

I'll go, but she is not within to come to him, I have just got time to know of Lucy her Maid, who first set me on work, what lye I shall tell next, for I am e'ne at my wits end---

[Exit Mrs. Pinchwife.

Mr. Pin,
Well I resolve it, Horner shall have her, I'd rather give him my
Sister than lend him my Wife, and such an alliance will prevent
his pretensions to my Wife sure,---I'll make him of kinn to her,
and then he won't care for her,

[Mrs. Pinchwife returns.

Mrs. Pinchwife
O Lord Budd I told you what anger you would make me with
my Sister.

Mr. Pinchwife
[75] Won't she come hither?

Mrs. Pinchwife
No no, alack a day, she's asham'd to look you in the face, and
she says if you go in to her, she'll run away down stairs, and
shamefully go her self to Mr. Horner, who has promis'd her
marriage she says, and she will have no other, so she won't---

Mr. Pinchwife
Did he so---promise her marriage---then she shall have no
other, go tell her so, and if she will come and discourse with

me a little concerning the means, I will about it immediately,
go---

[Exit Mrs. Pinchwife
His estate is equal to Sparkish's, and his extraction as much
better than his, as his parts are, but my chief reason is, I'd
rather be of kin to him by the name of Brother-in-law, than that
of Cuckold--- Well what says she now?

[Enter Mrs. Pinchwife

Mrs. Pinchwife
Why she says she would only have you lead her to Horners
lodging---with whom she first will discourse the matter before
she talk with you, which yet she cannot doe; for alack poor
creature, she says she can't so much as look you in the face,
therefore she'll come to you in a mask, and you must excuse her
if she make you no answer to any question of yours, till you
have brought her to Mr. Horner, and if you will not chide her,
nor question her, she'll come out to you immediately.

Mr. Pinchwife
Let her come I will not speak a word to her, nor [100] require a
word from her.

Mrs. Pinchwife
Oh I forgot, besides she says, she cannot look you in the face,
though through a mask, therefore wou'd desire you to put out
the Candle.

Mr. Pinchwife

I agree to all, let her make haste---there 'tis out---My case
Exit Mrs. Pinchwife puts out the Candle.

is something better, I'd rather fight with Horner for not lying
with my Sister, than for lying with my Wife, and of the two I
had rather find my Sister too forward than my Wife; I expected
no other from her free education, as she calls it, and her passion
for the Town---well---Wife and Sister are names which make
us expect Love and duty, pleasure and comfort, but we find'em
plagues and torments, and are equally, though differently
troublesome to their keeper; for we have as much a doe to get
people to lye with our Sisters, as to keep'em from lying with
our Wives.

Enter Mrs. Pinchwife Masked, and in Hoods and Scarves, and
a night Gown and Petticoat of Alitheas in the dark.

What are you come Sister? let us go then---but first let me lock
up my Wife, Mrs. Margery where are you?

Mrs. Pinchwife
Here Budd.

Mr. Pinchwife
Come hither, that I may lock you up, get you in, Come Sister
where are you now?

Locks the door.

[Mrs. Pinchwife gives him her hand, but when he lets her go,
she steals softly on t'other side of him, and is lead away by him
for his Sister Alitheia.]

The Scene changes to Horners Lodging. Quack Horner.

Quack.

What all alone, not so much as one of your Cuckolds here, nor
one of their Wives! they use to take their turns with you, as if
they were to watch you.

Horner

Yes it often happens, that a Cuckold is but his Wifes [125]
spye, and is more upon family duty, when he is with her gallant
abroad hindring his pleasure, than when he is at home with her
playing the Gallant, but the hardest duty a married woman
imposes upon a lover is, keeping her husband company always.

Quack.

And his fondness wearies you almost as soon as hers.

Horner

A Pox, keeping a Cuckold company after you have had his
Wife, is as tiresome as the company of a Country Squire to a
witty fellow of the Town, when he has got all his Mony,

Quack.

And as at first a man makes a friend of the Husband to get the Wife, so at last you are faine to fall out with the Wife to be rid of the Husband.

Horner

Ay, most Cuckold-makers are true Courtiers, when once a poor man has crack'd his credit for'em, they can't abide to come near him.

Quack.

But at first to draw him in are so sweet, so kind, so dear, just as you are to Pinchwife, but what becomes of that intrigue with his Wife?

Horner

A Pox he's as surly as an Alderman that has been bit, and since he's so coy, his Wife's kindness is in vain, for she's a silly innocent.

Quack.

Did she not send you a Letter by him?

Horner

Yes, but that's a riddle I have not yet solv'd---allow [150] the poor creature to be willing, she is silly too, and he keeps her up so close---

Quack.

Yes, so close that he makes her but the more willing, and adds but revenge to her love, which two when met seldome faile of satisfying each other one way or other.

Horner

What here's the man we are talking of I think.

Enter Mr. Pinchwife leading in his Wife Masqued, Muffled, and in her Sisters Gown.

Horner

Pshaw.

Quack.

Bringing his Wife to you is the next thing to bringing a Love Letter from her.

Horner

VWhat means this?

Mr. Pinchwife

The last time you know Sir I brought you a love Letter, now you see a Mistress, I think you'l say I am a civil man to you.

Horner

Ay the Devil take me will I say thou art the civillest man I ever met with, and I have known some; I fancy, I understand thee now, better than I did the Letter, but hark thee in thy eare---

Mr. Pinchwife

VWhat?

Horner

Nothing but the usual question man, is she found on thy word?

Mr. Pinchwife

VWhat you take her for a VVench and me for a Pimp?

Horner

Pshaw, wench and Pimp, paw words, I know thou art an honest fellow, and hast a great acquaintance among the Ladies, and perhaps hast made love for me rather than let [175] me make love to thy VVise---

Mr. Pinchwife

Come Sir, in short, I am for no fooling.

Horner

Nor I neither, therefore prythee let's see her face presently, make her show man, art thou sure I don't know her?

Mr. Pinchwife

I am sure you doe know her.

Horner

A Pox why dost thou bring her to me then?

Mr. Pinchwife

Because she's a Relation of mine.

Horner

Is she faith man, then thou art still more civil and obliging, dear Rogue.

Mr. Pinchwife

VWho desir'd me to bring her to you.

Horner

Then she is obliging, dear Rogue.

Mr. Pinchwife

You'l make her welcome for my sake I hope.

Horner

I hope she is handsome enough to make her self wellcome;
prythee let her unmask.

Mr. Pinchwife

Doe you speak to her, she wou'd never be rul'd by me.

Horner

Madam---

[Mrs. Pinchwife whispers to Horner

She says she must speak with me in private, withdraw prythee.

Mr. Pinchwife

She's unwilling it seems I shou'd know all her undecent
conduct in this business---

[Aside.

VVel then Ile leave you together, and hope when I am gone
you'l agree, if not you and I shan't agree Sir.---

Horner

VWhat means the Fool?---if she and I agree 'tis no matter what
you and I do.

[Whispers to Mrs Pin, who makes signs with her hand for him
to be gone.]

Mr. Pinchwife

[200] In the mean time I'll fetch a Parson, and find out
Sporkish and disabuse him. You wou'd have me fetch a Parson,
would you not, well then ---Now I think I am rid of her, and
shall have no more trouble with her---Our Sisters and
Daughters like Usurers money, are safest, when put out; but
our Wives, like their writings, never safe, but in our Closets
under Lock and Key.

[Exit Mr. Pinchwife

Enter Boy.

Boy.

Sir Jaspar Fidget Sir is coming up.

Horner

Here's the trouble of a Cuckold, now we are talking of, a pox
on him, has he not enough to doe to hinder his Wifes sport, but
he must other women's too.---Step in here Madam.

[Exit Mrs. Pinchwife

Enter Sir JaSparkish

Sir Jas.

My best and dearest Friend.

Horner

The old stile Doctor--- Well be short, for I am busie, what would your impertinent Wife have now?

Sir Jas.

Well guess'd y' faith, for I do come from her.

Horner

To invite me to supper, tell her I can't come, go.

Sir Jas.

Nay, now you are out faith, for my Lady and the whole knot of the virtuous gang, as they call themselves, are resolv'd upon a frolick of coming to you to night in a Masquerade, and are all drest already.

Horner

I shan't be at home.

Sir Jas.

Lord how churlish he is to women---nay prythee don't disappoint'em, they'l think 'tis my fault, prythee [225] don't, I'll send in the Banquet and the Fiddles, but make no noise on't, for the poor virtuous Rogues would not have it known for the

world, that they go a Masquerading, and they would come to no mans Ball, but yours.

Horner

Well, well---get you gone, and tell'em if they come, 'twill be at the peril of their honour and yours.

Sir Jas.

Heh, he, he---we'l trust you for that, farewell---

[Exit Sir JaSparkish

Horner

Doctor anon you too shall be my guest.

But now I'm going to a private feast.

The Scene changes to the Piazza of Covent Garden. Sparkish, Pinchwife.

Sparkish with the Letter in his hand.

Sparkish

But who would have thought a woman could have been false to me, by the world, I could not have thought it.

Mr. Pinchwife

You were for giving and taking liberty, she has taken it only
Sir, now you find in that Letter, you are a frank person, and so
is she you see there.

Sparkish

Nay if this be her hand---for I never saw it.

Mr. Pinchwife

'Tis no matter whether that be her hand or no, I am sure this
hand at her desire lead her to Mr. Horner, with whom I left her
just now, to go fetch a Parson to'em at their desire too, to
deprive you of her for ever, for it seems yours was but a mock
marriage.

Sparkish

Indeed she wou'd needs have it that 'twas Harcourt himself in a
Parsons habit, that married us, but I'm sure he told me 'twas his
Brother Ned.

Mr. Pinchwife

O there 'tis out and you were deceiv'd not she, [250] for you are
such a frank person---but I must be gone--- you'l find her at
Mr. Horners, goe and believe your eyes.

[Exit Mr. Pinchwife

Sparkish

Nay I'll to her, and call her as many Crocodiles, Syrens,
Harpies, and other heathenish names, as a Poet would do a
Mistress, who had refus'd to heare his suit, nay more his Verses
on her. But stay, is not that she following a Torch at t'other end
of the Piazza, and from Horners certainly---'tis so---
Enter Alithea following a Torch, and Lucy behind.
You are well met Madam though you don't think so; what you
have made a short visit to Mr. Horner, but I suppose you'l
return to him presently, by that time the Parson can be with
him.

Ali.

Mr. Horner, and the Parson Sir---

Sparkish

Come Madam no more dissembling, no more jilting for I am no
more a frank person.

Alithea

How's this.

Lucy.

So 'twill work I see---

[Aside.

Sparkish

Cou'd you find out no easie Country Fool to abuse? none but me, a Gentleman of wit and pleasure about the Town, but it was your pride to be too hard for a man of parts, unworthy false woman, false as a friend that lends a man mony to lose, false as dice, who undoe those that trust all they have to'em.

Lucy.

He has been a great bubble by his similes as they say---

[Aside.

Ali.

[275] You have been too merry Sir at your wedding dinner sure.

Spar

What d'y mock me too?

Ali.

Or you have been deluded.

Sparkish

By you.

Ali.

Let me understand you.

Sparkish

Have you the confidence, I should call it something else, since you know your guilt, to stand my just reproaches? you did not write an impudent Letter to Mr. Horner, who I find now has club'd with you in deluding me with his aversion for women, that I might not forsooth suspect him for my Rival.

Lucy.

D'y think the Gentleman can be jealous now Madam---

[Aside.

Ali.

I write a Letter to Mr. Horner!

Sparkish

Nay Madam, do not deny it, your Brother shew'd it me just now, and told me likewise he left you at Horners lodging to fetch a Parson to marry you to him, and I wish you joy Madam, joy, joy, and to him too much joy, and to my self more joy for not marrying you.

Ali.

So I find my Brother would break off the match, and I can consent to't, since I see this Gentleman can be made jealous.

[Aside.

O Lucy, by his rude usage and jealousy, he makes me almost afraid I am married to him, art thou sure 'twas Harcourt himself and no Parson that married us.

Sparkish

[300] No Madam I thank you, I suppose that was a contrivance too of Mr. Horners and yours, to make Harcourt play the Parson, but I would as little as you have him one now, no not for the world, for shall I tell you another truth, I never had any passion for you, 'till now, for now I hate you, 'tis true I might have married your portion, as other men of parts of the Town do sometimes, and so your Servant, and to shew my unconcernedness, I'll come to your wedding, and resign you with as much joy as I would a stale wench to a new Cully, nay with as much joy as I would after the first night, if I had been married to you, there's for you, and so your Servant, Servant.

[Exit Sparkish

Ali.

How was I deceiv'd in a man!

Lucy.

You'll believe then a fool may be made jealous now? for that easiness in him that suffers him to be led by a Wife, will likewise permit him to be perswaded against her by others.

Ali.

But marry Mr. Horner, my brother does not intend it sure; if I thought he did, I would take thy advice, and Mr. Harcourt for my Husband, and now I wish, that if there be any over-wise woman of the Town, who like me would marry a fool, for fortune, liberty, or title, first that her husband may love Play, and be a Cully to all the Town, but her, and suffer none but fortune to be mistress of his purse, then if for liberty, that he may send her into the Country under the conduct [325] of some housewifely mother-in law; and if for title, may the world give 'em none but that of Cuckold.

Lucy.

And for her greater curse Madam, may he not deserve it.

Ali.

Away impertinent---is not this my old Lady Lanterlus?

Lucy.

Yes Madam. [Aside. [and here I hope we shall find Mr. Harcourt---

[Exeunt Ali. Lucy.

The Scene changes again to Horner's Lodging.

Horner, Lady Fidget, Mrs. Daynty Fidget, Mrs. Squeamish, a Table, Banquet, and Bottles.

Horner

A Pox they are come too soon---before I have sent back my new---Mistress, all I have now to do, is to lock her in, that they may not see her---

[Aside.

Lady Fidget

That we may be sure of our wellcome, we have brought our entertainment with us, and are resolv'd to treat thee, dear Toad.

Dayn.

And that we may be merry to purpose, have left Sir Jasper and my old Lady Squeamish quarrelling at home at Baggammon.

Squeam.

Therefore let us make use of our time, lest they should chance to interrupt us.

Lady Fidget

Let us sit then.

Horner

First that you may be private, let me lock this door, and that, and I'll wait upon you presently.

Lady Fidget

No Sir, shut 'em only and your lips for ever, for we must trust you as much as our women.

Horner

You know all vanity's kill'd in me, I have no occasion for talking.

Lady Fidget

Now Ladies, supposing we had drank each of us [350] our two Bottles, let us speak the truth of our hearts.

Dayn. and Squeam.

Agreed.

Lady Fidget

By this brimmer, for truth is no where else to be found, [Not in thy heart false man.

[Aside to Horner

Horner

You have found me a true man I'm sure.

[Aside to Lady Fid.

Lady Fidget

Not every way---

[Aside to Horner

But let us sit and be Merry.

Lady Fidget sings.

1.

Why should our damn'd Tyrants oblige us to live,
On the pittance of Pleasure which they only give.
We must not rejoyce,
With Wine and with noise.
In vaine we must wake in a dull bed alone.
Whilst to our warm Rival the Bottle, they're gone.
Then lay aside charms,
And take up these arms [Side note: 1Kb]

2.

'Tis Wine only gives 'em their Courage and Wit,
Because we live sober to men we submit.

If for Beauties you'd pass.

Take a lick of the Glass.

'Twill mend your complexions, and when they are gone,

The best red we have is the red of the Grape.

Then Sisters lay't on.

And dam a good shape.

Dayn.

Dear Brimmer, well in token of our openness and [375] plain
dealing, let us throw our Masques over our heads.

Horner

So 'twill come to the Glasses anon.

Squeam.

Lovely Brimmer, let me enjoy him first.

Lady Fidget

No, I never part with a Gallant, till I've try'd him. Dear
Brimmer that mak'st our Husbands short sighted.

Dayn.

And our bashful gallants bold.

Squeam.

And for want of a Gallant, the Butler lovely in our eyes, drink
Eunuch.

Lady Fidget
Drink thou representative of a Husband, damn a Husband.

Dayn.
And as it were a Husband, an old keeper.

Squeam.
And an old Grandmother.

Horner
And an English Bawd, and a French Chirurgion.

Lady Fidget
Ay we have all reason to curse 'em.

Horner
For my sake Ladies.

Lady Fidget
No, for our own, for the first spoils all young gallants industry.

Dayn.
And the others art makes 'em bold only with common women.

Squeam.
And rather run the hazard of the vile distemper amongst them,
than of a denial amongst us.

Dayn.
The filthy Toads chuse Mistresses now, as they do Stuffs, for
having been fancy'd and worn by others.

Squeam.
For being common and cheap.

La. Lid.
[400] Whilst women of quality, like the richest Stuffs, lye
untumbled, and unask'd for.

Horner
Ay neat, and cheap, and new often they think best.

Dayn.
No Sir, the Beasts will be known by a Mistriss longer than by a
suit.

Squeam.

And 'tis not for cheapness neither.

Lady Fidget

No, for the vain fopps will take up Druggets, and embroider 'em, but I wonder at the depraved appetites of witty men, they use to be out of the common road, and hate imitation, pray tell me beast, when you were a man, why you rather chose to club with a multitude in a common house, for an entertainment, than to be the only guest at a good Table.

Horner

Why faith ceremony and expectation are unsufferable to those that are sharp bent, people always eat with the best stomach at an ordinary, where every man is snatching for the best bit.

Lady Fidget

Though he get a cut over the fingers---but I have heard people eat most heartily of another man's meat, that is, what they do not pay for.

Horner

When they are sure of their wellcome and freedom, for ceremony in love and eating, is as ridiculous as in fighting, falling on briskly is all should be done in those occasions.

Lady Fidget

Well then let me tell you Sir, there is no where [425] more freedom than in our houses, and we take freedom from a young person as a sign of good breeding, and a person may be as free as he pleases with us, as frolick, as gamesome, as wild as he will.

Horner

Han't I heard you all declaim against wild men.

Lady Fidget

Yes, but for all that, we think wildness in a man, as desirable a quality, as in a Duck, or Rabbet; a tame man, foh.

Horner

I know not, but your Reputations frightned me, as much as your Faces invited me.

Lady Fidget

Our Reputation, Lord! Why should you not think, that we women make use of our Reputation, as you men of yours, only to deceive the world with less suspicion; our virtue is like the State-man's Religion, the Quakers Word, the Gamesters Oath, and the Great Man's Honour, but to cheat those that trust us.

Squeam.

And that Demureness, Coyness, and Modesty, that you see in our Faces in the Boxes at Plays, is as much a sign of a kind woman, as a Vizard-mask in the Pit.

Dayn.

For I assure you, women are least mask'd, when they have the Velvet Vizard on.

Lady Fidget

You wou'd have found us modest women in our denyals only.

Squeam.

Our bashfulness is only the reflection of the Men's.

Dayn.

[450] We blush, when they are shame-fac'd.

Horner

I beg your pardon Ladies, I was deceiv'd in you devilishly, but why, that mighty pretence to Honour?

Lady Fidget

We have told you; but sometimes 'twas for the same reason you men pretend business often, to avoid ill company, to enjoy the better, and more privately those you love.

Horner

But why, wou'd you ne'er give a Friend a wink then?

Lady Fidget

Faith, your Reputation frightned us as much, as ours did you, you were so notoriously lewd.

Horner

And you so seemingly honest.

Lady Fidget

Was that all that deterr'd you?

Horner

And so expensive---you allow freedom you say.

Lady Fidget

Ay, ay.

Horner

That I was afraid of losing my little money, as well as my little time, both which my other pleasures required.

Lady Fidget

Money, foh---you talk like a little fellow now, do such as we expect money?

Horner

I beg your pardon, Madam, I must confess, I have heard that great Ladies, like great Merchants, set but the higher prizes upon what they have, because they are not in necessity of taking the first offer.

Dayn.

Such as we, make sale of our hearts?

Squeam.

We brib'd for our Love? Foh.

Horner

[475] With your pardon, Ladies, I know, like great men in Offices, you seem to exact flattery and attendance only from your Followers, but you have receivers about you, and such fees to pay, a man is afraid to pass your Grants; besides we must let you win at Cards, or we lose your hearts; and if you make an assignation, 'tis at a Goldsmiths, Jewellers, or China

house, where for your Honour, you deposit to him, he must pawn his, to the punctual Citt, and so paying for what you take up, pays for what he takes up.

Dayn.

Wou'd you not have us assur'd of our Gallants Love?

Squeam.

For Love is better known by Liberality, than by Jealousie.

Lady Fidget

For one may be dissembled, the other not---but my Jealousie can be no longer dissembled, and they are telling ripe:

[Aside.

Come here's to our Gallants in waiting, whom we must name, and I'll begin, this is my false Rogue.

[Claps him on the back.

Squeam.

How!

Horner

So all will out now---

Squeam.
Did you not tell me, 'twas for my sake only, you reported your
self no man?

[Aside to Horner.

Dayn.
Oh Wretch! did you not swear to me, 'twas for my Love, and
Honour, you pass'd for that thing you do?

Aside to Horner.

Horner
[500] So, so.

Lady Fidget
Come, speak Ladies, this is my false Villain.

Squeam.
And mine too.

Dayn.
And mine.

Horn.

Well then, you are all three my false Rogues too, and there's an
end on't.

Lady Fidget
Well then, there's no remedy, Sister Sharers, let us not fall out,
but have a care of our Honour; though we get no Presents, no
Jewels of him, we are savers of our Honour, the Jewel of most
value and use, which shines yet to the world unsuspected,
though it be counterfeit.

Horner
Nay, and is e'en as good, as if it were true, provided the world
think so; for Honour, like Beauty now, only depends on the
opinion of others.

Lady Fidget
Well Harry Common, I hope you can be true to three, swear,
but 'tis no purpose, to require your Oath; for you are as often
forsworn, as you swear to new women.

Horner
Come, faith Madam, let us e'en pardon one another, for all the
difference I find betwixt we men, and you women, we forswear
our selves at the beginning of an Amour, you, as long as it
lasts.
Enter Sir Jaspar Fidget, and old Lady Squeamish.

Sir Jas.

Oh my Lady Fidget, was this your cunning, to come to Mr. Horner without me; but you have been no where else I hope.

Lady Fidget

No, Sir JaSparkish

Old La. Squeam.

[525] And you came straight hither Bidy.

Squeam.

Yes indeed, Lady Grandmother.

Sir Jas.

'Tis well, 'tis well, I knew when once they were throughly acquainted with poor Horner, they'd ne'er be from him; you may let her masquerade it with my Wife, and Horner, and I warrant her Reputation safe.

Enter Boy.

Boy.

O Sir, here's the Gentleman come, whom you bid me not suffer to come up, without giving you notice, with a Lady too, and other Gentlemen---

Horner

Do you all go in there, whil'st I send 'em away, and Boy, do you desire 'em to stay below 'til I come, which shall be immediately.

Exeunt Sir Jasper, Lady Fidget Squeam. Lady Fidget Fidget, Mistris Dainty, Squeamish.

Boy.

Yes Sir.

[Exit.

Exit Horner at t'other door, and returns with Mistris Pinchwife.

Horner

You wou'd not take my advice to be gone home, before your Husband came back, he'll now discover all, yet pray my Dearest be perswaded to go home, and leave the rest to my management, I'll let you down the back way.

Mrs. Pinchwife

I don't know the way home, so I don't.

Horner

My man shall wait upon you.

Mrs. Pinchwife

No, don't you believe, that I'll go at all; what are you weary of me already?

Horner

No my life, 'tis that I may love you long, 'tis to secure my love, and your Reputation with your Husband, he'll never receive you again else.

Mrs. Pinchwife

What care I, d'ye think to frighten me with [550] that? I don't intend to go to him again; you shall be my Husband now.

Horner

I cannot be your Husband, Dearest, since you are married to him.

Mrs. Pinchwife

O wou'd you make me believe that---don't I see every day at London here, women leave their first Husband, and go, and live with other men as their Wives, pish, pshaw, you'd make me angry, but that I love you so mainly.

Horner

So, they are coming up---In again, in, I hear 'em:

Exit Mistris Pinchwife.

Well, a silly Mistris, is like a weak place, soon got, soon lost, a man has scarce time for plunder; she betrays her Husband, first to her Gallant, and then her Gallant, to her Husband. Enter Pinchwife, Alithea, Harcourt, Sparkish, Lucy, and a Parson.

Mr. Pinchwife

Come Madam, 'tis not the sudden change of your dress, the confidence of your asseverations, and your false witness there, shall perswade me, I did not bring you hither, just now; here's my witness, who cannot deny it, since you must be confronted--Mr. Horner, did not I bring this Lady to you just now?

Horner

Now must I wrong one woman for anothers sake, but that's no new thing with me; for in these cases I am still on the criminal's side, against the innocent.

[Aside.

Alithea

Pray, speak Sir.

Horner

It must be so---I must be impudent, and try my luck,
impudence uses to be too hard for truth.

[Aside.

Mr. Pinchwife
[575] What, you are studying an evasion, or excuse for her,
speak Sir.

Horner
No faith, I am something backward only, to speak in womens
affairs or disputes.

Mr. Pinchwife
She bids you speak.

Alithea
Ay, pray Sir do, pray satisfie him,

Horner
Then truly, you did bring that Lady to me just now,

Mr. Pinchwife
O ho---

Alithea
How Sir---

Harcourt
How, Horner!

Alithea
What mean you Sir, I always took you for a man of Honour?

Horner
Ay, so much a man of Honour, that I must save my Mistriss, I
thank you, come what will on't.

[Aside.

Sparkish
So if I had had her, she'd have made me believe, the Moon had
been made of a Christmas pye.

Lucy.
Now cou'd I speak, if I durst, and 'solve the Riddle, who am the
Author of it.

[Aside.

Alithea

O unfortunate Woman! a combination against my Honour,
which most concerns me now, because you share in my
disgrace, Sir, and it is your censure which I must now suffer,
that troubles me, not theirs.

Harcourt

Madam, then have no trouble, you shall now see 'tis possible
for me to love too, without being jealous, I will not only
believe your innocence my self, but make all the world [600]
believe it--- Horner I must now be concern'd for this Ladies
Honour.

Apart to Horner.

Horner

And I must be concern'd for a Ladies Honour too.

Harcourt

This Lady has her Honour, and I will protect it.

Horner

My Lady has not her Honour, but has given it me to keep, and I
will preserve it.

Harcourt

I understand you not

Horner

I wou'd not have you.

Mrs. Pinchwife

What's the matter with 'em all

[Mistress Pinchwife peeping in behind.]

Mr. Pinchwife

Come, come, Mr. Horner, no more disputing, here's the Parson,
I brought him not in vain.

Horner

No Sir, I'll employ him, if this Lady please.

Mr. Pinchwife

How, what d'ye mean?

Spark.

Ay, what does he mean?

Horner

Why, I have resign'd your Sister to him, he has my consent.

Mr. Pinchwife

But he has not mine Sir, a womans injur'd Honour, no more than a man's, can be repair'd or satisfied by any, but him that first wrong'd it; and you shall marry her presently, or---

[Lays his hand on his Sword.

Enter to them Mistress Pinchwife.

Mistriss Mr. Pinchwife

O Lord, they'll kill poor Mr. Horner, besides he shan't marry her, whilst I stand by, and look on, I'll not lose my second Husband so.

Mr. Pinchwife

What do I see?

Alithea

[625] My Sister in my cloaths!

Spark.

Ha!

Mrs. Pinchwife

Nay, pray now don't quarrel about finding work for the Parson, he shall marry me to Mr. Horner; for now I believe, you have enough of me.

[To Mr. Pinchwife.

Horner

Damn'd, damn'd loving Changeling.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Pray Sister, pardon me for telling so many lyes of you.

Harcourt

I suppose the Riddle is plain now.

Lucy.

No, that must be my work, good Sir, hear me.

Kneels to Mr. Pinchwife, who stands doggedly, with his hat over his eyes.

Mr. Pinchwife

I will never hear woman again, but make 'em all silent, thus---

[Offers to draw upon his Wife.

Horner
No, that must not be.

Mr. Pinchwife
You then shall go first, 'tis all one to me.

Offers to draw on Horner stopt by Harcourt.

Harcourt
Hold---
Enter Sir Jaspar Fidget, Lady Fidget, Lady Squeamish, Mrs.
Dainty Fidget, Mrs. Squeamish.

Sir Jas.
What's the matter, what's the matter, pray what's the matter Sir,
I beseech you communicate Sir.

Mr. Pinchwife
Why my Wife has communicated Sir, as your Wife may have
done too Sir, if she knows him Sir---

Sir Jas.
Pshaw, with him, ha, ha, he.

Mr. Pinchwife
D'ye mock me Sir, a Cuckold is a kind of a wild Beast, have a
care Sir---

Sir Jas.
No sure, you mock me Sir---he cuckold you! it can't be, ha, ha,
he, why, I'll tell you Sir.

Offers to whisper.

Mr. Pinchwife
I tell you again, he has whor'd my Wife, and [650] yours too, if
he knows her, and all the women he comes near; 'tis not his
dissembling, his hypocrisie can wheedle me.

Sir Jas.
How does he dissemble, is he a Hypocrite? nay then---how---
Wife---Sister is he an Hypocrite?

Old La. Squeam.
An Hypocrite, a dissembler, speak young Harlotry, speak how?

Sir Jas.
Nay then---O my head too---O thou libinous Lady!

Old La. Squeam.
O thou Harloting, Harlotry, hast thou don't then?

Sir Jas.
Speak good Horner, art thou a dissembler, a Rogue? hast thou--

-

Horner
Soh---

Lucy.
I'll fetch you off, and her too, if she will but hold her tongue.

[Apart to Horner

Horner
Canst thou? I'll give thee---

[Apart to Luc.

Lucy to Mr. Pinchwife
Pray have but patience to hear me Sir, who am the unfortunate cause of all this confusion, your Wife is innocent, I only culpable; for I put her upon telling you all these lyes,

concerning my Mistress, in order to the breaking off the match, between Mr. Sparkish and her, to make way for Mr. Harcourt.

Spark.
Did you so eternal Rotten-tooth, then it seems my Mistress was not false to me, I was only deceiv'd by you, brother [675] that shou'd have been, now man of conduct, who is a frank person now, to bring your Wife to her Lover--- ha---

Lucy.
I assure you Sir, she came not to Mr. Horner out of love, for she loves him no more---

Mrs. Pinchwife
Hold, I told lyes for you, but you shall tell none for me, for I do love Mr. Horner with all my soul, and no body shall say me nay; pray don't you go to make poor Mr. Horner believe to the contrary, 'tis spitefully done of you, I'm sure.

Horner
Peace, Dear Idiot.

[Aside to Mrs. Pinchwife

Mrs. Pinchwife
Nay, I will not peace.

[700] Sir,---

Mr. Pinchwife
Not 'til I make you.
Enter Dorilant, Quack.

Sir Jas.
Nay I do believe you truly---pardon me my virtuous Lady, and
dear of honour.

Dorilant
Horner, your Servant, I am the Doctors Guest, he must excuse
our intrusion.

Old La. Squeam.
What then all's right again.

Quack.
But what's the matter Gentlemen, for Heavens sake, what's the
matter?

Sir Jas.
Ay, ay, and now let us satisfie him too.

They whisper with Mr. Pinch.

Horner
Oh 'tis well you are come---'tis a censorious world we live in,
you may have brought me a reprieve, or else I had died for a
crime, I never committed, and these innocent Ladies had
suffer'd with me, therefore pray satisfie these worthy,
honourable, jealous Gentlemen
[Whispers.
---that---

Mr. Pinchwife
An Eunuch! pray no fooling with me.

Quack.
I'll bring half the Chirurgions in Town to swear it.

Quack.
O I understand you, is that all---Sir Jasper, by heavens and
upon the word of a Physician
[Whispers to Sir Jasper.

Mr. Pinchwife
They---they'll swears a man that bled to death through his
wounds died of an Apoplexy.

Quack.

Pray hear me Sir---why all the Town has heard the report of him.

Mr. Pinchwife

But does all the Town believe it.

Quack.

Pray inquire a little, and first of all these.

Mr. Pinchwife

I'm sure when I left the Town he was the lewdest fellow in't.

Quack.

I tell you Sir he has been in France since, pray ask but these Ladies and Gentlemen, your friend Mr. Dorilant, Gentlemen and Ladies, han't you all heard the late sad report of poor Mr. Horner.

All Lady Fidget

Ay, ay, ay.

Dorilant

Why thou jealous Fool do'st thou doubt it, he's an errant French Capon.

Mrs. Pinchwife

'Tis false Sir, you shall not disparage poor Mr. Horner, for to my certain knowledge---

Lucy.

[725] O hold---

Squeam.

Stop her mouth---

[Aside to Lucy.

Old Lady Fidget

Upon my honour Sir, 'tis as true.

[To Pinch.

Dayn.

D'y think we would have been seen in his company---

Squeam.

Trust our unspotted reputations with him!

Old Lady Fidget

This you get, and we too, by trusting your secret to a fool---

[Aside to Horner

Horner

Peace Madam,---[Aside to Quack. well Doctor is not this a good design that carries a man on unsuspected, and brings him off safe.---

Mr. Pinchwife

Well, if this were true, but my Wife---

[Aside

[Dorilant whispers with Mrs. Pinch.

Ali.

Come Brother your Wife is yet innocent you see, but have a care of too strong an imagination, least like an over-concern'd timerous Gamester by fancying an unlucky cast it should come, Women and Fortune are truest still to those that trust 'em.

Lucy.

And any wild thing grows but the more fierce and hungry for being kept up, and more dangerous to the Keeper.

Ali.

There's doctrine for all Husbands Mr. Harcourt.

Harcourt

I edifie Madam so much, that I am impatient till I am one.

Dorilant

And I edifie so much by example I will never be one.

Eew.

And because I will not disparage my parts I'll ne're be one.

Horner

And I alas can't be one.

Mr. Pinchwife

[750] But I must be one---against my will to a Country-Wife, with a Country-murrain to me.

Mrs. Pinchwife

And I must be a Country Wife still too I find, for I can't like a City one, be rid of my musty Husband and doe what I list.

[Aside.

Horner

Now Sir I must pronounce your Wife Innocent, though I blush whilst I do it, and I am the only man by her now expos'd to shame, which I will straight drown in Wine, as you shall your suspicion, and the Ladies troubles we'l divert with a Ballet, Doctor where are your Maskers.

Lucy.

Indeed she's Innocent Sir, I am her witness, and her end of coming out was but to see her Sisters Wedding, and what she has said to your face of her love to Mr. Horner was but the usual innocent revenge on a Husbands jealousy, was it not Madam speak---

Mrs. Pinchwife

Since you'l have me tell more lyes---
[Aside to Lucy and Horner.
Yes indeed Budd.

Mr. Pinchwife

For my own sake fain I wou'd all believe.
Cuckolds like Lovers shou'd themselves deceive.

But---sighs---

His honour is least safe, (too late I find)
Who trusts it with a foolish Wife or Friend.
A Dance of Cuckolds.

Horner

Vain Fopps, but court, and dress, and keep a puther,
To pass for Womens men, with one another.
[775] But he who aimes by women to be priz'd,
First by the men you see must be despis'd.

Back matter

FINIS.

EPILOGUE spoken by Mr. Hart:

Now you the Vigorous, who dayly here
O're Vizard-Mask, in publick domineer,
And what you'd doe to her if in Place where;
Nay have the confidence, to cry come out,
Yet when she says lead on, you are not stout;
But to your well-drest Brother straight turn round
And cry, Pox on her Ned, she can't be sound:
Then slink away, a fresh one to ingage,
With so much seeming heat and loving Rage,
You'd frighten listning Actress on the Stage:

Till she at last has seen you huffing come,
And talk of keeping in the Tyreing-Room,
Yet cannot be provok'd to lead her home:
Next you Fallstaffs of fifty, who beset
Your Buckram Maidenheads, which your friends get;
And whilst to them, you of Atchievements boast,
They share the booty, and laugh at your cost.
In fine, you Essens't Boyes, both Old and Young,
Who wou'd be thought so eager, brisk, and strong,
Yet do the Ladies, not their Husbands, wrong:
Whose Purses for your manhood make excuse,
And keep your Flanders Mares for shew, not use;
Encourag'd by our Womans Man to day,
A Horners part may vainly think to Play;
And may Intreagues so bashfully disown
That they may doubted be by few or none,
May kiss the Cards at Picquet, Hombre,---Lu,
And so be thought to kiss the Lady too;
But Gallants, have a care faith, what you do.
The World, which to no man his due will give,
You by experience know you can deceive,
And men may still believe you Vigorous,
But then we Women,---there's no cous'ning us.
FINIS.